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SUBJECT: OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL: STATEMENT ON MOLDOVA

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

We regret Transnistrian authorities' decision to deny President Voronin access to his home town of Corjova, in the Transnistrian region of Moldova.

Incidents like this have the potential to undermine the environment for interactions between officials in Chisinau and Tiraspol, and show how easily a positive atmosphere can be spoiled. We are reminded again that the path to negotiations and a lasting resolution will not be easy.

Despite this, we look forward to the November 7-8 roundtable in Odessa and to the November 20-21 talks among the 3 plus 2 mediators and observers in Vienna. It is our hope that these events will clear the way for formal talks in the 5 plus 2 format, and that all parties soon will return to the negotiating table to discuss the core issues of the conflict, including the definition of Transnistria's status within Moldova and the withdrawal of Russian forces from Moldova's territory. A settlement respecting Moldova's independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity must be the goal of all our efforts.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
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